

Mrs. WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN

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WASHINGTON D. C. 20003

January 8, 1971

General Marshall Carter, President
George C. Marshall Research Foundation
Lexington, Virginia 24450

Dear General Carter:

Your letter to me following the shipment of my husband's Collection is much appreciated.

The date of your letter is December 24--two weeks ago now. Every day is a reproach to me--delay in this case is reprehensible. But I was the victim of a pleurisy-type virus for 12 days which incapacitated me through Christmas and New Year. Then upon returning to the library-office here in my house I found my typewriter afflicted with a determination not to move ahead, and other malicious tricks. Oh, the total depravity of inanimate things!--Yesterday a gifted friend of mine came by and persuaded the mean-minded machine to behave.

Going to Lexington shall be my first sojourn, once some disposition, temporary or otherwise, can be made of my house. Dr. Pogue tells me that weather in the month of January in Lexington can be very unpleasant and suggests I not hurry too much.

It is most kind of you to arrange for the search in NSA files and library for additional items from my husband's Collection. I say "from" advisedly. I was present when the two Security men from NSA did their search-and-seizure act, taking some articles out of the Army's own safe in this library. (Later one of those two men was dismissed from NSA for security reasons).

May I say, to you as President of the Marshall Research Foundation, how pleased I am that you are its President; and that I am certain that the Foundation will be enriched by the William F. Friedman Collection. I refer not only to his incomparable analytical gifts; his catholicity of taste; his universality of knowledge--as typified by the ruling precept of his life: "Knowledge is Power"--; all of these qualities were enhanced by the stardust of genius--true original genius. For he launched a new age. (Just as the Space Age was launched in a later generation) When we staffed the Cipher Bureau at Riverbank Laboratories in 1917, doing all the deciphering work for all Departments of Government, there were no more than five persons in the whole of the U.S. who so much as knew what the words "cipher" and "code" meant. We were at one and the same time, the students, the teachers,

the workers. Even the translators. When the Cipher Bureau was established in Washington (Military Intelligence) that staff had complete cribs, consisting of our solved messages and their accompanying cipher texts. H.O. Yardley's inability to give any one any credit, even his own staff persons, is now a matter of history. (It has been said that Yardley's "American Black Chamber" is tenpercent fact and 90 percent fiction.) In May of 1918 1st Lieut. William F. Friedman left for GHQAEF, refusing to stay any longer out of uniformed service; during that six months, the Cipher Bureau in Washington, preceded by the French and British experts in France, had declared two systems unbreakable; WFF proved otherwise, while still at Riverbank, with no assistance from anyone and no co-workers. Thus began a series of "challenges", a kind of "William F. Friedman-against-the-world": the solution of the A.T.&T. Printing Telegraph Cipher in 1919-and-20; the Hebern Machine in 1924.....I could go on and on, but I shall not tire you further-at this time, at least.

The postscript to the above long paragraph should be: There MUST be a Biography. Little-Brown wants very much to do the biography, but so far all the "name" writers they have approached have either been bound by one or two advances for already planned volumes; or the writer is afraid of the technicality of the subject. The latter objection is based on false premises; the biography need contain no technicalities-except the most primitive that any teen-ager could understand... This brings me to my question;- do you have any name or names to suggest as writer? Either for Little-Brown(who suggests the first one or two instalments would be published in LIFE) or without Little-Brown?

Thanking you for your patience, I am

Most sincerely

Elizbeth Smith Friedman

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